



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Conference of European Statisticians

#### Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses

##### Twentieth Meeting

Geneva, 26–28 September 2018

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

##### Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

### Annotated provisional agenda

To be held in room VII at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, starting at 9:30 am on Wednesday, 26 September 2018.

#### I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers.
2. Methodology, new data sources including big data.
3. Measurement of the quality of administrative sources for use in censuses.
4. Future censuses beyond 2020.
5. Technology.
6. Dissemination.
7. Geo-spatial information.
8. Census content: design of questionnaire for paper, internet and tablets; compliance with the CES Recommendations.
9. Relation between censuses and other statistics, such as demographic, labour and regional statistics.
10. Future work.
11. Other business.

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## **II. Annotations**

The meeting is organised jointly with Eurostat following the provisions of the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2018, adopted by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and approved by the UNECE Executive Committee.

### **1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers**

The UNECE in cooperation with Eurostat organize regularly meetings for the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses. The main purpose of the meetings is to facilitate the exchange of experiences among countries, increase knowledge on various issues related to the planning and conduction of population and housing censuses, promote the development and implementation of the CES Recommendations for the Censuses of Population and Housing. This results in increased capacity by countries to plan and conduct the population and housing censuses and produce data comparable across countries. The proposed provisional agenda will be presented for the approval by the participants of the meeting.

### **2. Methodology, new data sources including big data**

Available information on plans for the 2020 census round show that a significant number of UNECE countries, particularly in Western Europe, will increasingly adopt alternative census methodologies, often making use of data from administrative and multiple sources.

In this session, countries will discuss their plans for the 2020 census round, focusing in particular on alternative census methodology and new data sources. The possible use of “big data” either as a direct source of census data or for improving the coverage and quality of address lists will also be discussed, possibly involving representatives of companies that produce or manage big data. The results of tests, when available, will be presented, so that the experiences of single countries will be discussed and possibly compared with those from other countries.

### **3. Measurement of the quality of administrative sources for use in censuses**

In February 2018, the Bureau of the CES established a new UNECE Task Force on Measuring the Quality of Administrative Sources for Use in Censuses. The task force will present at the meeting the progress of its work and seek feedback. Countries will also have the opportunity to share their experiences in measuring the quality of administrative sources for censuses with reference to past censuses or the preparations for the 2020 round.

### **4. Future censuses beyond 2020**

The October 2017 UNECE-Eurostat Expert Meeting on Censuses included a panel discussion on the future of censuses beyond 2020. In the discussion, consensus emerged that providing data on a decennial basis will no longer be acceptable in future, and that more frequent updates will be necessary. It was also observed that the discussion on the future of censuses should not focus solely on incremental improvements based on the past, but may require a paradigm shift. The Expert Group proposed to undertake work on this subject at the UNECE level, building on the work done at the EU level.

In February 2018, the Bureau of the CES requested the UNECE Steering Group on Censuses to prepare by 2020 an in-depth analysis on the future of population and housing censuses after the 2020 round. The Steering Group will present at the meeting the progress of its work and seek feedback.

Countries and international organizations will also have the opportunity to present their plans or strategies for future censuses beyond the 2020 round.

## **5. Technology**

In view of the 2020 census round a significant number of UNECE countries are planning or at least considering the adoption of innovative census technologies, particularly for data collection. They include the Internet response option, which in some countries will be the main enumeration method, and the use of tablets or other handheld devices for field data collection. Many countries are also working on innovations that will allow geo-referencing census data, making use of digitized maps and GPS.

In this session, countries will discuss their plans for using innovative technology in the 2020 census round. The results of tests with new technology will be presented, if available.

## **6. Dissemination**

The dissemination of census results should be given prominent importance in all countries regardless of the census methodology adopted, since “only used statistics are useful statistics”. Considering the huge resources normally spent to conduct the census and produce the most relevant and accurate results, it is fundamental that adequate resources are invested and appropriate means are identified to disseminate the census results.

Countries will have the opportunity to share information on their plans for census dissemination, including different media to be used and products to be developed to satisfy the needs of different categories of users.

## **7. Geo-spatial information**

Over the last years, in most countries, the demand for geo-referenced census data has increased significantly. At the same time, the technology available to produce and disseminate geo-referenced statistical data has improved rapidly, and the costs have often decreased, making this technology relatively affordable for an increasing number of countries.

Some countries have already accumulated experience in producing and disseminating grid or other geo-referenced statistics as outputs of their censuses, while others still have limited experience. The session will provide an opportunity to exchange experiences, present results, discuss opportunities and challenges.

## **8. Census content: design of questionnaire for paper, internet and tablets; compliance with the CES Recommendations**

In this session, countries are expected to discuss various issues related to questionnaire design and, more in general, compliance with census recommendations for the next round.

Questionnaire design is a critical part of census preparations for all countries that will conduct a traditional or combined census. Many countries will use both paper and electronic questionnaires, for tablets and/or internet self-response. Particular challenges are

faced by the countries that for the next census have to design an electronic questionnaire for the first time, with no or limited experience in this field.

Compliance with the CES Recommendations concerns all countries, regardless of the census methodology adopted. Countries using registers and administrative data – in particular – may face challenges in complying with recommended definitions or classifications, particularly for census topics that are new or have changed compared to previous census rounds.

## **9. Relation between censuses and other statistics, such as demographic, labour and regional statistics**

Many countries in the UNECE region have moved or are moving towards census methodologies based on registers and administrative data, to improve the cost-effectiveness of the census, and to produce at least partial updates more frequently than every ten years. As part of this transition, the census is more and more integrated with the other statistical production of NSIs, in particular with annual demographic statistics and social surveys. This change has significant implications in many areas, including the organization of the various surveys, the concepts, definitions and classifications adopted, and the outputs produced.

In this session, participants are expected to discuss their experiences with regard to the relation between censuses and other statistical activities carried out by NSIs, including demographic, labour and regional statistics.

## **10. Future work**

In this session, the plans for future work in the UNECE region to support countries in the implementation of the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round will be presented and discussed.

## **11. Other business**

In this session, the experts may discuss additional census-related items proposed by the Secretariat or the participants.

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